

TOWN OF ACTON
SIDEWALK COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of April 13, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Acton Memorial Library Conference Room

Present: Kate Chung, Dana Snyder-Grant, Pam Cochrane, Dick Calandrella, Leslie Hogan, Bettina Abe, Steve Evans, Sytske Campbell.

Citizen Concerns:

Sonja Heels joined us, interested in updates regarding a desired sidewalk along Route 111/Massachusetts Avenue connecting Boxborough and West Acton. (an agenda item, following.) Robert Schoen joined us regarding the future routing of the sidewalk on High Street, and was advised that his best route was to discuss this with the town Engineering Department.

Latest Developments on South Acton Train Station Design - David Martin

We reviewed plans "South Acton Station Landscape Plan" 60% Design with David Martin.

Construction estimated by end of 2nd Quarter 2012.

The ARRT (Assabet River Rail Trail, possible 2013 construction) will terminate near the train station, at one of three possible points: Jones field, the Caouette land, or the TK2 parcel owned by the MBTA on the south side of the RR track.

Routes to and from parking areas and the south side train station entrance were of concern, and discussed. For example, from Jones field may be an unlit path, and/or may coincide with the ARRT. David will ask the MBTA about the possibility of a sidewalk along the north side of the railroad, from Martin street to the Main parking lot / North station entrance.

Procedural Matters:

The March 2011 minutes were approved.

Update re Sidewalk Easements at Town Meeting

All Sidewalk Easements were approved on the consent agenda. Kate distributed to us her very fine presentation from the Town Meeting.

Update from FinCom meeting – Bettina

The Finance Committee voted to recommend all the sidewalk easements. Mary Ann Ashton suggested we (Sidewalk Committee) meet with the Finance Committee re sidewalk funding. ► Kate will schedule such. Notes: \$268,000 in sidewalk gift funds; some is dedicated to a particular sidewalk. \$132,000 is expected from Quail Ridge for Great Road. \$250,000 is expected from Mill Creek for High Street. \$164,000 in 2011 town budget for 2011. We reviewed a couple of past sidewalk project actual costs v. estimates: Main St \$383,000 est. v. \$270,000 actual; Prospect St. \$85,000 est. v. \$40,000 actual.

Update from Engineering

Route 111: Survey would take a couple of weeks. No easement issues. Estimated \$17000 estimated survey and design cost.

Main Street: a section near the Post Office to be topcoated by Patriots Day.

Sidewalk Paving Equipment/Laser Level: No plans at this time to request additional equipment.

Route 111: West Acton– Sargent Memorial Library, Boxboro

[Background: This proposed sidewalk connecting Boxborough and West Acton along Route 111 (“The Route 111Bike/Pedestrian project”) is categorized as the highest priority (Urgent) by MAGIC (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination), a division of our regional planning agency, MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council). Construction funding, up to 80%, would be from Federal and State sources, not from Acton. We must have substantially completed the 25% design phase to be approved for construction funding. While desirable to design it soon, to take advantage of state and federal funding, there is a concern about taking it out of priority order.]

Updates: The estimate of the Acton cost for design is \$9,000-11,000. This sidewalk scored 105 points as part of prioritization of all proposed sidewalks. Kate Chung met with Elizabeth Hughes, Boxborough Town Planner and discussed a number of issues, including:

- Being granted construction money, per Elizabeth: “a strong likelihood of getting their attention if we work together... not a lot of projects going on in our region.”
- We have to complete the Survey/Design before applying for the grant. This means we need to be committed, with “money in the game” ahead of time.
- If approved, Federal Gov will pick up 80% and the State will pick up 10%.
- Our stretch of Route 111 measures about 2250’. Boxboro measures 4500’.

We listed pros and cons of recommending proceeding now:

Pros:

Small amount of \$ needed, for a big ‘bang’.

No Engineering time impact if outsourced, so it would not affect progress on other sidewalks.

Connects Boxborough to Acton; potentially benefits W. Acton businesses.

Scored 105 (relatively high).

Time is of the essence – there is a window of opportunity.

High anticipated bike and walker usage.

Being responsive to opportunity.

We are a regional school district and this would be the travel route for some of the school population, for school, sports, and social activities.

Expands opportunity for environmentally friendly ‘green’ commuting.

Cons:

We are making an exception.

Sets a precedence by going out of order.

Not High anticipated bike and walker usage.

Possible criticism.

We voted in favor (7 Aye, 1 Nay, 0 abstain) to:

Recommend that the Board of Selectmen (BoS) fund the survey and design of this sidewalk (Route 111: West Acton to the Boxboro town line) as a high priority, *and also* recommend outsourcing the survey and design, in order to minimally impact town design and engineering manpower, and so minimally impact progress on other higher priority sidewalks.

This recommendation is contingent on the continued expectation that construction funding comes from a grant of state and federal funding.

► Kate will ask to meet with the BoS to make this recommendation, and will circulate a presentation ahead of time. (we noted that there is also a sidewalk committee review with the BoS in May or June, but wanted to keep them separate)

Other Business

Three Sidewalk Committee members' terms are expiring in June 2011. All wish to continue to serve. ► Kate will note this to the BoS.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully,
Steve Evans

Open Meeting law requires that the following must be included in the minutes:

- ✓ Date, place, time and matters discussed.
- ✓ Summaries of discussions
- ✓ List of documents used
- ✓ Decisions made
- ✓ Actions taken
- ✓ Record of all votes (yeas, nays and abstentions).
- ✓ A list of all documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings, maps and presentations used by the body at the open or executive session.

Future Meetings Planned: (All at 7pm at the Acton Memorial Library Conference Room) (all on the second Wednesday of the month)

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

September 14

October 12

November 9

December 14